

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, UR, SV, NO, US
SUBJECT: U.S. VIEWS ON SOVIET INTERESTS IN NORTH NORWAY AND
VICINITY
REF:(A) OSLO 707; (B) OSLO A-88, APRIL 2, 1971

1. DEPARTMENT IS PLEASED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER IS TAKING
A FRESH LOOK AT NORWEGIAN POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET
UNION IN THE BARENTS SEA AND THE ARCTIC AND THAT HE HAS
CHOSEN TO SHARE HIS THOUGHTS WITH US BEFORE THE PRIME
MINISTER VISITS THE USSR. HIS STUDY, WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY
BE MORE EXTENSIVE THAN OUR OWN, SHOULD SHOW THAT NORWAY HAS
FOLLOWED A VERY CAUTIOUS POLICY TOWARDS THE USSR IN THAT
AREA, BASED UPON ITS CONTINUING ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET
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SECURITY INTERESTS. NORWAY'S POLICY OF NOT ALLOWING FOREIGN
MILITARY FORCES STATIONED ON ITS TERRITORY, OF PROSCRIBING
EXERCISES IN FINNMARK, AND OF BEING MORE THAN CORRECT IN ITS
MANAGEMENT OF SVALBARD ARE EXAMPLES OF THIS SUPER-CAUTIOUS

POLICY OF NON-PROVOCATION. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE DEPARTMENT FINDS THAT REF B., WHILE OUT-OF-DATE IN SEVERAL RESPECTS, IS STILL USEFUL AND VALID. UNFORTUNATELY A SPECIFIC STUDY SUCH AS THE ONE REQUESTED BY FRYDENLUND (PARA 2 REFTTEL) DOES NOT EXIST HERE.

2. THE SOVIETS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HYPER-SENSITIVE TO THEIR ARCTIC FRONTIER. IN UPCOMING NORWEGIAN/SOVIET TALKS, THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO ALLUDE TO THEIR SECURITY CONCERNS, AS WELL AS TO THEIR ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS, AND TO THEIR RIGHTS AS A MAJOR POWER AND AS A SIGNATORY OF THE 1920 TREATY OF PARIS. USSR SECURITY CONCERNS STEM FROM THE NEED TO ASSURE ACCESS TO THE OPEN SEAS FOR THE EXPANDING SOVIET FLEET, AND SOVIET STRATEGIC INTERESTS ON NATO'S NORTHERN FLANK, AS REFLECTED IN THE SOVIET MILITARY CONCENTRATIONS ON THE KOLA PENINSULA. GROWING INTEREST IN SVALBARD AND OFFSHORE OIL AND MINERAL RESOURCES HAS RAISED FURTHER THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE AREA. THE SOVIETS PROBABLY CONSIDER THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION BASICALLY MEETS THEIR MILITARY AND SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE NORTH, ALTHOUGH THEY CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO LOOK FOR WAYS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR STRATEGIC POSITION, FOR EXAMPLE BY ERODING NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY OVER SVALBARD.

3. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT, HOWEVER REASONABLY THE SOVIETS PRESENT THEIR VIEWS TO THE NORWEGIANS AS TO THEIR SECURITY AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS, THESE INTERESTS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO IMPINGE UNDULY ON NORWEGIAN POSITIONS IN REGARD TO NORWEGIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING SVALBARD. NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS ONLY ONE OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE TREATY AND THAT NORWAY IS THEREFORE NOT ALONE IN ITS STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN ITS SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE ISLAND GROUP. IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT THE NORWEGIANS WILL KEEP IN MIND SOVIET STRATEGIC INTERESTS, SUCH AS ACCESS RIGHTS TO THE BARENTS SEA. HOWEVER, THAT SEA IS AN INTERNATIONAL BODY OF WATER IN WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES BESIDES THE SOVIET UNION ARE
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INTERESTED AND WISH TO PROTECT THEIR RIGHT OF ACCESS ALSO.

4. APART FROM OUR DESIGNATION OF THE AREAS NEAR THE USSR AS SENSITIVE AREAS IN TERMS OF EXERCISES AND MILITARY OPERATIONS, THE USG HAS NOT DEVELOPED A SPECIFIC POLICY TOWARDS THE NORTH ATLANTIC/SVALBARD/BARENTS SEA AREA RECENTLY OR IN ANY GREAT DETAIL IN THE PAST. HOWEVER, IN 1971, U.S. POLICY IN THE ARCTIC AS DEVELOPED BY AN INTER-AGENCY GROUP WAS AS FOLLOWS: (IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT) .THE UNITED STATES WILL SUPPORT THE SOUND AND RATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARCTIC, GUIDED BY THE PRINCIPLE OF MINIMIZING ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT; WILL PROMOTE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN

THE ARCTIC; AND WILL AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ESSENTIAL SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE ARCTIC, INCLUDING PRESERVATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF FREEDOM OF THE SEAS AND SUPERJACENT AIRSPACE." THE AREA AROUND NORTH

NORWAY IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO US JUST BECAUSE IT DOES PROVIDE THE SOVIET UNION ICE-FREE ACCESS TO THE SHIPPING LANES OF THE WORLD AND THE SOVIET SSBN PATROL AREA LOITERING ZONES OF THE ATLANTIC. OUR NATO ALLIES ALONG THE NORTHERN FLANK SHARE THIS CONCERN WITH US: GREENLAND AND CANADA PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR US TO TRACK SOVIET AIRCRAFT; THE NATO BASE IN ICELAND PROVIDES A MOST IMPORTANT AIR AND SEA MONITORING STATION; AND THE NORWEGIAN MONITORING OF SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN AREAS ADJACENT TO NORWAY PROVIDES A WIDE VARIETY OF VITAL INFORMATION ON SOVIET ACTIVITIES AND WEAPONRY. THEREFORE, A LACK OF DIRECT U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE EXPLOITATION OF SVALBARD AT THE MOMENT DOES NOT DIMINISH IN THE SLIGHTEST OUR STRATEGIC (AND ECONOMIC) INTEREST IN THE WHOLE AREA. WE WOULD DO NOTHING TO LIMIT LEGITIMATE SOVIET ACCESS TO THE AREA BUT WE WOULD CERTAINLY BE STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ANY SOVIET ASSUMPTION OF HEGEMONY THERE. WE WOULD URGE THE NORWEGIANS TO TAKE EVERY APPROPRIATE OCCASION TO ASSERT THEIR SOVEREIGNTY OVER SVALBARD. THE SOVIETS ARE LIKELY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NORWEGIAN FAILURE TO SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE ON THEIR SOVEREIGNTY.

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5. THE ISSUE OF A U.S. POSITION ON SVALBARD'S CONTINENTAL SHELF AND EXPLOITATION RIGHTS HAS WIDESPREAD LEGAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONNOTATIONS. AN ANSWER IS IN THE PROCESS OF DEPARTMENT AND INTERAGENCY CLEARANCE AND WILL BE CABLED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IT IS LIKELY THAT WHATEVER POSITION WE DO TAKE, WE WILL NOT ARGUE AGAINST NORWAY'S RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE THE CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY WITH THE USSR PURSUANT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IN THE ABSENCE OF OBJECTION FROM THE OTHER CONTRACTING PARTIES.

6. THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT CONSIDER THIS QUESTION CLOSED AND WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION AFTER YOU TALK TO FRYDENLUND. YOU MAY USE ANY MATERIAL CONTAINED HEREIN OR IN REF AIR B THAT YOU FEEL WILL BE USEFUL TO OUR PURPOSES. WE WILL REPORT TO YOU AS THE RESULTS OF FURTHER STUDY BECOME AVAILABLE. KISSINGER

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